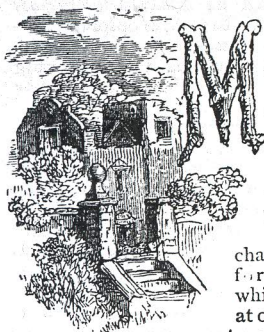


MARGARET TRENT, AND HOW SHE KEPT HOUSE.

By DORA HOPE.



wearer

MARGARET'S new maid, Anne, was, indeed, a highly superior person, as has been said before. She always wore in the morning the neatest of dark print dresses, changing it at noon for plain black, which impressed one at once with the eminent respectability of the

hand with her work, never in a flurry. In a word, she was a treasure, and a perfect contrast from the late domestic, Betsy.

This last-named damsel was now married to the faithful baker, and the young couple, as Mr. and Mrs. Newman, had recently opened a small baker's shop in the neighbourhood on their own account, which, it is unnecessary to say, was patronised by the Trents.

But to return to Anne. She soon fell into Margaret's ways, or, rather, Margaret soon accepted most of her maid's ways and suppressed her own ideas, for her admiration of Anne's good qualities was certainly, at this stage, somewhat tempered with awe. On one or two points, however, they were not quite agreed.

Margaret, as we said before, was resolved not to keep her little drawing-room simply for use on state occasions. She had the idea that it had been furnished and made pretty for their own enjoyment, as well as for that of their friends, and having only the two rooms, she elected to sit there always in the afternoons and evenings. With this idea there had been a gas fire placed there, which could be turned out whilst the family were at dinner, or had vacated the room for any length of time. There had been a good deal of discussion as to the advisability of this arrangement, as gas fires are certainly more expensive than coal, but the consideration which decided them was that with only one servant the very great saving of labour quite compensated for the slight additional expense, and Margaret found it a great comfort, before she began fires regularly, to be able to light it just for half an hour, if she felt chilly, without trouble to anyone.

In spite of its convenience, however, Anne seriously disapproved of this arrangement. She appeared to have conscientious scruples against the "best room" being used by the family when without visitors. She put on a solemn and reproachful look when Margaret told her, after lunch one day, to light the



"WHY, MARGARET, WHAT A HUGE APRON! AND GLOVES TOO!"